

REMARKS

In view of the above-described claim amendments, the prior claim amendments submitted in the After Final Amendment dated September 4, 2002, the arguments in the After Final Amendment and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims 73-78, 80-99, 102 and 103 standing in the application are in condition for allowance.

Claim 73 has been amended so as to define the features of the present invention as shown in the middle and lower figures of the attached drawing sheet, in which the catalyst component is directly supported within, or at least partially within, the pores of the ceramic support. Since none of the cited references teaches or suggests "a catalyst-ceramic body comprising a ceramic support having a number of pores and particles of a catalyst component directly supported within, or at least partially within, the pores of said ceramic support," as now claimed in amended claim 73, claim 73 and its dependent claims are believed to patentably define thereover.

Furthermore, since no cited references teach or suggest "at least one of Si, Al and Mg elements constituting the cordierite composition being replaced by a metal having a catalyst activity" as recited in claim 80, claim 80 and its respective dependent claims are also believed to patentably define thereover.

Finally, since none of the cited references teach or suggest the processes of claims 87 and 88, these claims and their respective dependent claims are also believed to patentably define over the cited art.

In rejecting the claims in the Final Office Action of the parent case, the Examiner was of the opinion that Beaunseigneur disclosed micro pores having a size of less than 5 μm . Applicants respectfully disagree as will be explained in greater detail below.

With reference to the following patentability arguments, please see the attached sheet of figures. Beaunseigneur discloses a method for solving the problem associated with provision of a wash coat layer for a catalyst. That is, Beaunseigneur discloses that a coating layer having a large surface area such as a wash coat is necessary for a ceramic honeycomb. If the micro pores having a pore size less than 5 μm are effective to support a catalyst component, a wash coat layer is not necessary. Nevertheless, since a wash coat layer is formed in Beaunseigneur, it clearly suggests that the micro pores of a ceramic honeycomb of Beaunseigneur cannot support a catalyst component.

In Beaunseigneur, the entry of a wash coat layer —comprising a catalyst component—into micro pores having a pore size of less than 5 μm is prevented so as to provide a support having thermal shock resistance. Therefore, a catalyst component (catalyst particles), present in the wash coat layer is not even partially within the micro pores having a pore size less than 5 μm (see the upper figure of the attached sheet and the cited reference at Figure 3, column 2, lines 3-19, and column 3, line 64 through column 4, line 8).

In contrast, in the present invention, catalyst components are present within the fine pores of a support having a fine pore size of 100 nm or less (see the middle figure of the attached sheet and compare 5 μm with 100 nm or less). In Applicants' invention, even if the fine pore is less than 0.1 μm in size, a catalyst component can still be partially supported within the fine pore (see the lower figure of the attached sheet).

Therefore in view of the present amendments to claim 73 and the prior amendments to the claims in the aforementioned September 4, 2002 Amendment and the remarks contained therein and above, reconsideration and favorable action in this case is respectfully requested. All of the claims, standing in the application, are now believed to be in condition for allowance and an early notification to that effect is earnestly solicited. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claim(s) by the current amendment. The attached page(s) is captioned "**Version With Markings To Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

73. (Twice Amended) A catalyst ceramic body comprising a ceramic support having a number of pores and a catalyst component directly supported within, or at least partially within, the pores of said [on a ceramic support without a coating layer on a surface of the] ceramic support.